

Syllabus: Serious Games

Instructor: Matt Nolan

Assistant Professor of Game Sound and Composition

George Mason University College of Visual and Performing Arts

Computer Game Design

Mail Stop:1c3

Office: Art & Design 2023

Classroom: AB 2002

Office Hours: Thursday 2- 4:30 PM or by appointment

Contact: 703-993-9591

mnolan4@gmu.edu (NOT MASONLIVE) *Students must use their MasonLive email account to receive important University information, including communications related to this class. I will not respond to messages sent from or send messages to a non-Mason email address.*

GAME 399-001

78070 Class

10:30 am-1:10 pm

AB 2002

Course Description:

A course that will focus on the study, market, platforms, innovation, and development of Serious games. Games for Education, Science, Exercise, Social issues, Advertising, Training, Wellness, Government, and Community development are some of the topics to be covered.

Objectives:

To build student awareness of the techniques, methods, and research used to ensure quality planning and design for serious games through existing examples, peer critique and discussions, research, writing, and production of Serious Games.

Requirements and Evaluation:

At the beginning of each class meeting, students should be prepared to discuss the assigned readings, topic assignments, and game examples. In addition, students should be prepared to discuss with the class the status and stage of their project(s), as well as any design, structural, technical, theoretical and historical issues. A lecture will follow, and then students are expected to work during class on their assignments or project. The assigned readings and other materials outside of your textbook will be on reserve in the Johnson Center Library if they are not available online or in class.

Students are expected to build and maintain a portfolio of original research, writing, and designs. This portfolio will be reviewed at the end of the semester. Students are expected to have these documents saved on a physical drive (USB) named with their first initial and last name. Files should be well organized into categories to facilitate easy review and access to files when working on projects.

Outline

Starting the first week of class, students will do research for a proposal detailing their Mid-Term Project: the intended audience and purpose, the origin of the idea, and the potential effects and implications of this design.

In October, Students are required to present a research poster and paper.

At Mid-Term, students are required to present and submit an original Design document and supporting research paper.

In the 9th week of class, students will write a proposal detailing their final project: the intended audience and purpose, platform, client, the origin of their chosen 'original' serious game idea, and resource(s) for the development and distribution of the game.

In the final week of class, students will provide a 20-minute presentation discussing the technical, structural and other original content of their final project.

A series of short projects and Homework will be assigned to compliment most lectures.

Homework and assignments are to be submitted to Blackboard on time in order to receive full credit, unless otherwise instructed.

Texts:

Serious Games, Clark Abt, Viking Press, 1970.

Persuasive Games, Ian Bogost

Grading:

Grading will be based on:

Participation in classroom discussions and Homework (25%)

Students Come to Class Every Week (See Attendance Policy for more Details)

Students prepare for and actively engage in class discussion (e.g., demonstrate active listening, not distracted by electronics or peers)

Students thoughtfully engage in in-class assignments and activities

Students constructively participate in group activities

Students participate in class discussion by

Raising informed discussion points;

Connecting discussion to reading material, news, and relevant experiences;

Asking questions;

Listening to other perspectives;

Sharing the floor with others; and

Posting thoughtfully to course discussion boards.

Poster presentations(10%)

Portfolio (20%)

Mid-term presentation and project (20%)

Final presentation and project (25%)

To receive a grade of "A" a student must achieve a minimum average grade of 90% on the course work requirements.

To receive a grade of "B" a student must achieve a minimum average grade of 80% on the course work requirements.

To receive a grade of "C" a student must achieve a minimum average grade of 70% on the course work requirements.

To receive a grade of "D" a student must achieve a minimum average grade of 60% on the course work requirements.

Failure to receive a "D" grade will result in a grade of "F".

If you have a documented learning disability or other condition that may affect academic performance you should:

- 1) *make sure this documentation is on file with Disability Services (SUB I, Rm. 4205; 993-2474; <http://ds.gmu.edu>) to determine the accommodations you need;*
- 2) *talk with me to discuss your accommodation needs.*

George Mason University is committed to providing a learning, living and working environment that is free from discrimination and a campus that is free of sexual misconduct and other acts of interpersonal violence in order to promote community well-being and student success.

Attendance Policy: Please arrive to class on time. You are allowed ONE unexcused absence. Your second and following unexcused absences will lower your final grade by one letter grade. 5 unexcused absences will result in a final grade of "F".

Honor Code Statement: *The integrity of the University community is affected by the individual choices made by each of us. Mason has an Honor Code with clear guidelines regarding academic integrity. Three fundamental and rather simple principles to follow at all times are that: (1) all work submitted be your own; (2) when using the work or ideas of others, including fellow students, give full credit through accurate citations; and (3) if you are uncertain about the ground rules on a particular assignment, ask for clarification. No grade is important enough to justify academic misconduct. Plagiarism means using the exact words, opinions, or factual information from another person without giving the person credit. Writers give credit through accepted documentation styles, such as parenthetical citation, footnotes, or endnotes. Paraphrased material must also be cited, using MLA or APA format. A simple listing of books or articles is not sufficient. Plagiarism is the equivalent of*

intellectual robbery and cannot be tolerated in the academic setting. If you have any doubts about what constitutes plagiarism, please see me.